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CBC Newsletter

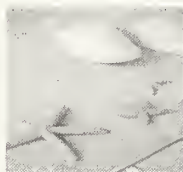
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For members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

Volume 59

October 2013

Number 5



CBC Winter Meeting - Wrightsville Beach, NC

Katherine Higgins

The Wilmington and Southport Christmas Bird Counts consistently rank in the top five counts nationally for the greatest number of species seen, approaching 160 each winter for these two areas in the Lower Cape Fear River Basin. The field trips at the Carolina Bird Club winter 2014 meeting will cover some of these same areas. The meeting headquarters is at Wrightsville Beach and the dates are January 24 and 25, 2014, only a few weeks after the Christmas Bird Count dates. Here is some early information about the meeting.

The Lower Cape Fear offers some of the best winter birding in the Carolinas due in part to a variety of habitats including the ocean, maritime forests, saltwater mudflats, freshwater lakes and marshes, pine forests and more.

Wrightsville Beach is just across the Intracoastal Waterway from Wilmington. We will be near winter birding hotspots including Johnnie Mercer's Pier, Air-lie Gardens, Greenfield Lake, the Battleship North Carolina area, Ft. Fisher, Kure Beach, Bald Head Island, Oak Island, Brunswick Town, and Boiling Spring Lakes. Wrightsville Beach and Wilmington boast many fine restaurants along the coast and in the downtown area. The Wilmington River Walk along the Cape Fear River is a great place to hang out for sightseeing, shopping, and great food and beverages. So even though our hotel is on Wrightsville Beach,

Wilmington is just across a couple of bridges to our west.

The fieldtrip areas in and around Wrightsville Beach will provide opportunities to see birds like Nelson's and Saltmarsh Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, Loggerhead Shrike, Marbled Godwit, four rail species, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Great Cormorant, Anhinga, and three scoter species. Some rare birds such as Ross's Goose, Dickcissel, Bachman's Sparrow, Razorbill and Parasitic Jaeger might be seen. Ocean watching at Wrightsville Beach will be available from Johnnie Mercer's pier and from the hotel. If you have never watched Northern Gannets fishing just outside the waves, you are in for a real treat.

Our meeting site headquarters and host hotel is the Blockade Runner on Wrightsville Beach. Half of the rooms have ocean and sunrise views and half have views of the Intracoastal Waterway and the sunset. Room rates will be a bargain at \$89/\$79 plus taxes. A full, chef-prepared breakfast is included in the room rates. The hotel will also host our Saturday night buffet, and their chef is highly rated and recommended by frequent visitors.

The rooms have king or queen bed(s), 42" Plasma TV, WiFi, refrigerator, coffee maker, and hair dryer.

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Put your Coffee Mug Where Your Heart Is

Phil Fowler



I love the aroma of freshly brewed coffee and its complex favor. I start most days with a cup or two and like a little decaf at dinner with dessert. As a dedicated and involved CBC member, I am passionate about birds. In our world today, with tropical rainforests being cleared at an alarming rate for commercial agriculture, are these two life pleasures compatible?

In her excellent article in the February 2013 issue of *Bird Watching* magazine, The True Cost of Coffee, Julie Craves writes: "I cannot state it any plainer than this: If you are buying inexpensive grocery store or fast-food coffee, you are contributing to the destruction of bird habitat and the decline of migratory songbirds. It is one of the worst things you can do for the environment on a daily basis..."

Most commercial coffees available today are known as "sun coffees". These coffees were developed for high yields and low production costs with no consideration of ecological impact. They are grown on large farms in full sun on land that has been cleared of native vegetation, is heavily fertilized, and subjected to pesticides and herbicides. This is most likely what you are drinking every day as your morning pick-me-up. If you think buying a name brand coffee is safe, here are some of the most popular brands that are "sun coffees": Nescafe, Taster's Choice, Folgers, Milestone, Dunkin' Donuts, Maxwell House, Sanka, Chock Full o' Nuts, and Chase & Sandborn. This list is not comprehensive, so do not think that if your favorite brand is not listed that you are in the clear.

Nearly all of our migrating song birds are negatively affected by "sun coffee" production. All such farms are nearly devoid of animal life, especially birds. By contrast, as Julie Craves found in her bird banding projects in Central and South America, and Scott Weidensaul found in his surveys, bird-friendly coffee farms (shade grown using organic practices) are biologically diverse and "dripping" with song birds.

How can you know you are helping rather than hurting with your coffee purchases? Many coffees will be labeled shade grown, which sounds good, but there is no agreed-upon or legal definition of shade grown.

Shade grown can mean anything from the rustic method of planting coffee in existing forests of native trees to growing coffee in a large cleared field "shaded" by a few non-native eucalyptus trees. The most reliable way to know is to look for certification. These are the most common:

Bird-Friendly

This is the only true "shade grown" certification. This certification was developed by ecologists at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and has the strictest habitat requirements of any coffee certification. Bird-friendly coffee not only has to be shade grown, using rustic practices, it also has to be organic. Only coffee certified by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center can be called bird-friendly. This is the only certification endorsed by the CBC Executive Committee, Scott Weidensaul (who spoke at our 75th Anniversary meeting in Raleigh, NC), and me. In addition, the CBC Executive Committee will work with our banquet caterers to make sure that only bird-friendly coffee is served at future CBC meetings.

Organic

To be certified organic in the United States, coffee must be produced under standards established by the Department of Agriculture, even if it is grown in another country.

Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance is a non-profit organization that promotes sustainable agriculture and its certification program covers many crops, including coffee. Neither shade management nor organic farming is required. It is not as strict as bird-friendly, but helpful in areas where lots of shade is not possible and for those farms which cannot meet all organic requirements. I know that Caribou Coffee uses Rainforest Alliance certified coffee.

Fair Trade

This certification is primarily concerned with lessening poverty among coffee farmers and improving their overall standard of living. While this is certainly a worthwhile cause, it says nothing about how the coffee is grown.



Coffee!



Obviously, finding any of these certifications on coffee makes it a better choice than mass-produced “sun coffee”. However, the Smithsonian Bird-Friendly certification is the only one which guarantees sustainably grown coffee and improved bird habitat.

I can attest from personal experience that switching to only bird-friendly coffee is not easy and involves personal inconvenience. Before eating out, I call ahead and ask restaurants if they use certified coffee; if they don't, I take my own or skip coffee. Eating breakfast out is especially problematic, since for me skipping my morning coffee is not an option. I own a small thermos and brew my own coffee to carry in with me. I have even taken to asking restaurant managers to start stocking bird-friendly coffee so I can stop bringing coffee in with me. You may not think this will make a difference, but if enough customers ask about bird-friendly coffee and then deny the restaurant the profit from selling a cup of coffee, it can.

Buying bird-friendly coffee is not as easy as stopping by your local supermarket and picking up a can of something. I had to do a good deal of searching before finding a reliable source for both decaf and regular Smithsonian Certified coffee. I now purchase all my coffee from Birds & Beans. This small roaster uses only bird-friendly beans and sells over the internet. I used to purchase bird-friendly locally from S & D Coffee and Tea. They have a large roasting plant near my house in Concord, NC and sell a Smithsonian Certified regular coffee. However, since they only sell regular, I had to look elsewhere for both decaf and regular, even though I like the taste of their regular coffee.

Finding a reliable source for bird-friendly coffee was not the end to the pain; this “specialty coffee” also costs more. For instance, a 20.6 ounce can of regular Folger's at my local Harris Teeter costs \$6.72 a pound whereas a 2 pound bag of Birds & Beans coffee runs \$10.43 a pound; a \$3.71 per pound difference. This is not insignificant, especially if you drink a lot of coffee. Why the disparity? Bird-friendly coffee farming practices necessarily have lower yields because other plants, which are providing the shade for the coffee and habitat for song birds, take up space. Organic

farming practices require more labor to keep down weeds and pests than simply spraying with herbicides and pesticides. Bird-friendly coffee needs to cost more not only to cover the inherently higher expense of growing the coffee, but to encourage more farmers to adopt sustainable practices and allow those farmers already using sustainable practices to stay in business. On the positive side, economics shows that increased demand in a market where consumers are willing to pay more will inevitably lead to more supply and possibly lower prices.

The bottom line on bird-friendly coffee is that it costs more, tastes better, is better for you and the environment, and should be the only choice for coffee drinkers who are also serious about conservation and increasing migratory bird populations. This will not be easy or cheap, but since masochists like me are willing to share with you what we have learned, it will not be as hard for you. However, this is still a great opportunity for you to make something of a martyr of yourself for a worthy cause; please do not pass it up.

For additional information try these websites:
Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center: <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/SCBI/MigratoryBirds/Coffee/default.cfm>

This site will give you a load of information about bird-friendly coffee and where to find it.

My personal choice for bird-friendly coffee:
Birds & Beans
<http://birdsandbeans.com/>

Scott Weidensaul quotes:
<http://birdsandbeans.com/weidensaul.html>

S & D Coffee and Tea
Phone: (800) 933-2210
<http://www.sndcoffee.com/>

Or contact me, Phil Fowler, at:
janmfowler@gmail.com

Or simply Google bird-friendly coffee and start reading. This article owes a great debt to Julie Craves and Scott Weidensaul for information and inspiration.

Wings Over Water 2013

Wings Over Water, the annual festival celebrating the wildlife and wild lands of Eastern North Carolina, returns for a 17th year. The 2013 dates are October 22-27, which many will note is a couple of weeks earlier than in past years. Late October brings a chance for less challenging weather than early November and will not compete with the popular Outer Banks Marathon for lodging and restaurant space.

Greg Miller, one of the three birders featured in the book "The Big Year", will be the keynote speaker. In the span of a single calendar year Greg flew over 90,000 miles, drove another 45,000, and tallied 715 species of birds in North America. This whirlwind accomplishment virtually guarantees an evening of entertaining stories! Greg not only participated in the epic "big year" detailed in Mark Obmascik's popular book, but also worked as an on-set advisor for the major motion film production starring Steve Martin, Owen Wilson, and Jack Black. Greg's presentation promises to be both entertaining and informative. Attendees may also have the opportunity to interact with Greg in a small-group environment during several new field trips.

As in past years, birding trips to famed Outer Banks locations such as Pea Island, Oregon Inlet, Bodie Island Lighthouse, Hatteras Point and others will be popular. New offerings include eBird 101, ocean watching from Jeanette's Pier, birding the peat-based lakes of the Albemarle Peninsula, a special "Birding on a Budget" led by Greg Miller, birding North Pond (Pea Island) by tram, becoming a luckier birder (also with Greg Miller), and a tram tour at Mattamuskeet NWR. Last year's festival resulted in a bird list of more than 170 species... in spite of not being able to access Hatteras Island due to hurricane damage! Now that Hatteras Island (including Pea Island NWR) is "back in business", what will the 2013 list look like?

But Wings Over Water is not just about birding. Non-birding partners, children, and yes, even birders wishing to take a break, have a variety of offerings to choose from including photography seminars, paddle trips, natural history walks, botanical programs, and an astronomy outing.

(Continued on page 6)

Swallow-tailed Kites Nest in North Carolina

Biologists with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission discovered the first Swallow-tailed Kite nest in North Carolina on May 7 while conducting aerial surveys in Bladen County.

They located the nest in the top of a bald cypress along the Cape Fear River, north of Lock and Dam 1 and east of Hwy. 87, outside of Riegelwood. The discovery is welcome news to biologists because it is definitive proof that this N.C. Wildlife Action Plan priority species is breeding in the state.

"There have been many sightings of the Swallow-tailed Kite in this same vicinity for several years in the spring and summer so we strongly suspected that they were nesting, but we continued to consider them a 'probable breeder' because we lacked evidence of successful breeding," said John Carpenter, a wildlife diversity biologist with the Commission. "Because Swallow-tailed Kites nest in remote swamps, it was difficult to find nests during previous surveys."

David Allen, Wildlife Diversity Program supervisor for the Coastal region and Maria Whitehead from The Nature Conservancy conducted the last Swallow-tailed Kite survey in June 2008 along the same stretch of the Cape Fear River where the nest from earlier this month was found. While they saw birds defending a territory at the time, they didn't see any signs of nesting activity — a fact that Allen attributed to the time of year.

"June is late in the season for nesting birds, so finding nests is difficult because the adults are not incubating," Allen said.

Swallow-tailed Kites, one of nine hawk species found in North Carolina, are striking black-and-white birds with a deeply forked tail. They are skillful fliers, hunting from the air and swooping down on unsuspecting prey, which they then eat in mid-air.

According to National Audubon Society, the historic range of breeding Swallow-tailed Kites once spanned as far north as Minnesota and west through Texas.

(Continued on page 5)

Nesting Habitat Improvements at Pea Island NWR

Due to on-going work to repair the dike that was blown out during Hurricane Irene, a nesting habitat project on Pea Island that had been logistically impossible for the Refuge to accomplish has now become a reality! Because managers had been unable to hold water in North Pond due to the dike damage and pump replacement, contractors recently had a narrow window of time to transport mowing equipment to a small island in North Pond. The two-acre island was originally constructed as ground-nesting habitat for black ducks, gadwalls, grassland species, and shorebirds many years ago. But, the vegetation had grown to a level that prevented these birds from using it for nesting. "The stars lined up for us on this one. The timing of the pump work made it possible to remove the older, taller growth from this little island just in time for the ground-nesting species to use it this season," said Deputy Refuge Manager Scott Lanier. Irene's dike blow-out moved massive amounts of sand into North Pond adjacent to one of many small islands, and low water enabled equipment to reach the island. Since the small trees and large shrubs have been removed, managers anticipate fire may be used to keep the vegetation at a grassy state.

Refuge Managers believe this to be a win-win for nesting birds on Pea Island. There are lots of other areas that have grown up into trees and shrubs for the birds who nest in those habitats. This mowing project will really contribute to the quality and quantity of ground-nesting habitat on the refuge. "So, if you saw mowing activity on Pea Island this past spring, keep an eye on that site over the next few months to witness how productive it becomes for these ground-nesting birds. We're hoping to see lots of broods of Black Ducks and Gadwalls," added Lanier.

-Courtesy of the Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges Newsletter

Kites

(Continued from page 4)

However, due to habitat loss, they now are found only in fragmented populations in bottomland forests along rivers from North Carolina down to Florida and west to the Louisiana/Texas border. Because they nest almost exclusively in large river swamps, in the tops of trees, biologists typically search for them using helicopters or other aircraft.

In North Carolina, Swallow-tailed Kites are found mainly along the Cape Fear River during the breeding season, although sightings of the birds have been recorded as far north as Buxton during migration or after the breeding season.

While the bird is not federally listed as endangered or threatened, it is listed as a priority species in North Carolina's Wildlife Action Plan, which means it is a species that the Wildlife Commission has targeted for conservation actions that biologists hope would preclude the need for federal listing.

Now that a nesting pair has been confirmed, Carpenter and Allen have conducted aerial surveys on other larger river systems in southeastern North Carolina. On May 10, they surveyed the Waccamaw River and part of the Black River by fixed-wing aircraft but did not find additional nests or see any other Swallow-tailed Kites. According to Allen, these larger river systems will yield the best chance of finding additional birds.

"The Swallow-tailed Kite is often referred to as a bird that requires one of the largest home ranges," Allen said. "In fact, they are not generally found in areas of less than 10,000 acres of bottomland forest. We hope to be able to continue surveying in years to come to locate additional nests and monitor their range expansion."

The Newsletter and The Chat are online on the CBC website. The most recent editions of each are only accessible to CBC members. To access the "members only" content, you must first create a login and password. This can be done at <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/register.html>. Once you have your login and password established, you can login at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/login.html>.

<http://www.carolinabirdclub.org>



CBC Bonus Trip to the NC Outer Banks November 30 - December 1

Widely considered at the top of the list for early winter birding sites in North Carolina, the Outer Banks of Dare County are home to thousands of wintering

swans, ducks, geese, shorebirds, waders, gulls, and more.

Join members of the Carolina Bird Club as we explore the Bodie Island lighthouse area, Oregon Inlet, Pea Island NWR, the ocean beaches of Hatteras and Bodie Islands and other "hotspots". The trip will focus on waterfowl and shorebird identification as well as building a broad trip list including everything from grebes to sparrows.

The trip starts Saturday, November 30, at 7:30 a.m. in the Bodie Island Lighthouse parking lot. Saturday will be devoted to birding along the immediate coast. Sunday will include a stop at Alligator River NWR and potentially Palmetto-Peartree Preserve.

Birds that you can expect to see include loons, numbers of Tundra Swans and Snow Geese, most of the dabbling ducks that winter in eastern North Carolina, chances to see sea ducks including all three American scoters, gulls, wintering passerines, and winter shorebirds including American Avocet and possibly Purple Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher and Piping Plover.

Wings Over Water

(Continued from page 4)

Registration is open, and field trip offerings, pricing, and sign-up are available at the Wings Over Water website: www.wingsoverwater.org.

The event promises exciting trips, fun evening events, and the chance to meet new friends! Hope to see you there!

Alligator River NWR may provide an opportunity to see Black Bear, raptors, shorebirds (if water levels are right) and numbers of Tundra Swan and waterfowl.

Logistics:

The fee for this field trip is \$25 and advance registration is required. Participation is limited to 15. Participants are responsible for lodging and meals. A number of motels, hotels, and other lodging are available in Nags Head north through Kitty Hawk. We will attempt to carpool in order to reduce the number of vehicles caravanning to the birding sites. Spotting scopes are useful if you have one. Dress for the weather and in layers. If we are enjoying a warm early winter, mosquito repellent may be useful. Lunch on Saturday will likely either be at a seafood restaurant or KFC. If you prefer, bring a bag lunch. A variety of restaurants are open for Saturday dinner. The trip should end around noon on Sunday.

To register for this field trip contact Steve Shultz at sshultz@nc.rr.com or (919) 629-7226. Upon confirmation of your slot on the trip you will be sent a registration form/waiver that can be submitted with your trip fee. Note that there is a modest fee to walk out on Jeanette's Pier.

Winter Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Check out their web-site and webcam at: <http://blockade-runner.com>. The address of the hotel is 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480. For reservations call 910-256-2251 and make sure to tell them you are with the Carolina Bird Club.

Look for registration information and trip descriptions in the next CBC Newsletter and on our web-site: www.carolinabirdclub.org.

Hope to see you at Wrightsville Beach in January!

The Sound of Singing A Remembrance of John Watson

by Clyde Smith

John Watson, president of the Carolina Bird Club for two terms from 1985-87, died June 16, 2013, at Penick Village in Southern Pines, N.C., at the age of 98.

John and Libba, his wife of more than 65 years, joined CBC in 1975. John's experience as a hospital administrator in four North Carolina locations and steady, dependable presence led to his being elected treasurer in 1983 and president in 1985. His determination that CBC would have a worthy celebration of its 50th anniversary in 1987 was realized when members gathered in Raleigh, N.C. for the big event under his leadership. After leaving office John and Libba became the friendly face of the Club as they handled registration for the seasonal meetings for the next 15 years.

Music was a feature of the memorial service conducted June 22, 2013, at Southern Pines United Methodist Church with a congregational hymn and two anthems by the chancel choir. John's love of singing and the presence of his rich baritone voice in that choir over the years was remembered.

After graduating with a degree in chemistry from Duke University, John attended the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. His reasons for not pursuing an operatic career were varied. The Reverend Thomas L. Sweeley, who officiated at the memorial service, said that John often claimed that in Boston he discovered that there was a singer just as

good on every street corner. He told others that he was interested only in singing and there were too many academic requirements involved. He told me once, perhaps with tongue in cheek, that he had damaged his voice cheering at Duke athletic events. In any event, he may have abandoned opera, but he never gave up singing.

In his meditation on Psalm 105:1-3, the Reverend Sweeley spoke of John's ministry through singing and asked those present to listen as he could almost hear the sound of singing. It may have been John's voice he heard or perhaps the mockingbird that perched in a tree overlooking the memorial garden as John's ashes were committed to the earth he loved.

Winton Assumes VP Role

In July President Katherine Higgins appointed Scott Winton of Durham to fill the unexpired term of Mark Buckler in the role of Eastern North Carolina Vice President. The term ends in spring 2014.

Scott is known to many from his informative posting on Carolinabirds, as a guide on pelagic birding trips off the North Carolina coast, and from his research work on birds that he undertakes as part of his studies for an advanced degree. You may also find yourself on a fieldtrip led by Scott at an upcoming CBC meeting.

Welcome New Members! The CBC welcomes the following new members. Jill Midgett Waterford, CT Dan & Amy Hockett Charlotte, NC	Cecilia Beardsley Fletcher, NC	Trish Williams Wilmington, NC	Elaine McManus Raleigh, NC	Rosemary Unger & Don Sparrow Cary, NC
	Deanna Smith Columbia, SC	Linn Finger Charlotte, NC	Laurie Walden Columbia, SC	New Life Member Joseph Lanham Clemson U. Institute of Applied Ethno- Ornithology Seneca, SC
	Parkin & Serena Hunter Columbia, SC	William Rule Beaufort, NC	Sherry & Hampton Lane Wilmington, NC	
	Katherine Hare Charleston, SC	Ann Donaldson Mt. Pleasant, SC	Cindy & Ken Groff Hilton Head, SC	
	Chelsea McDougall Wilmington, NC	Judy Walker Charlotte, NC	Ann Brice Wilson, NC	

Bonus field trip to Colombia's Caribbean Coast

9 DAYS, 8 NIGHTS
JAN 10TH – 18TH, 2014
STARTING FROM
CARTAGENA

Lead by Scott Winton and Natalia Ocampo Peñuela

Bird coastal mangroves and
estuaries; search for endemics in
the foothills and cloud forests of
Sierra Nevada Santa Marta; and
find regional specialties in tropical
dry forest and scrub!

- 13 SPOTS -
SIGN UP
BEFORE
OCT 1ST

COST:
\$2000

Includes: lodging, ground
transportation, food, guides
Does not include: Airfare to
Cartagena, travel insurance



To see the complete trip itinerary and reserve your spot, visit
www.carolinabirdclub.org

Birder's Book Review

Steve Shultz



The Warbler Guide

Tom Stephenson & Scott Whittle

ISBN 978-140084-6863, 560 pages, paper flexibound
2013, Princeton University Press, \$29.95

Field guides, specifically the venerable 1934 book *A Field Guide to the Birds* by Roger Tory Peterson, changed birding in a way that only a few other tools (like high quality binoculars and the Internet) could. For the first time birders could take a book into the field, or study it at home, that contained all of the birds one was likely to encounter on an outing. The ability to correctly identify birds encountered in the field soared. But the field guide's "all in one" format necessarily means that each depicted species must be given only a brief overview lest the tome swell to the size of an encyclopedia. Enter the "Identification Guide". Usually weightier than a "field guide", an identification guide delves more deeply into bird identification and often focuses on a single family or group of birds. These books are meant for at-home study, but are often portable enough to haul into the field when targeting specific types of birds.

Three groups of birds that have perennially given birders collective fits are raptors, shorebirds, and warblers. Raptors now have a multitude of identification guides, and O'Brien/Crossley/Karlson's *The Shorebird Guide* does an admirable job of covering North American shorebirds. That leaves the delightful wood warblers. Heretofore the Peterson title by Dunn & Garrett *A Field Guide to Warblers of North America* has been the benchmark, and the detailed drawings and text still deserve a spot on every warbler-lover's bookshelf. But now there is a new kid in town that threatens to give Dunn & Garrett a run for the money. *The Warbler Guide* by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle hit booksellers this summer, and it looks to be worth serious consideration. The 560 pages cover all 56 of the warblers likely to be seen in the U.S. and Canada.

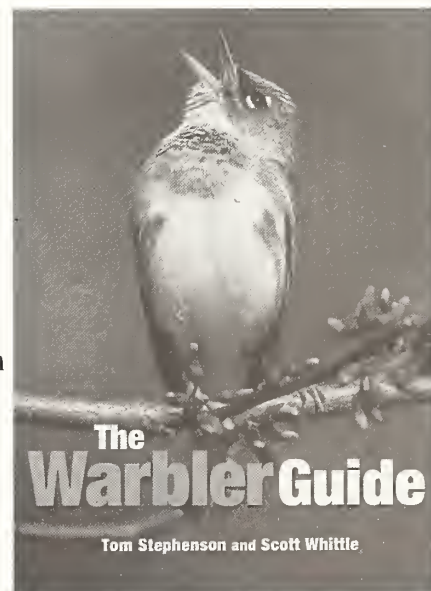
I especially like the treatment given to each species where only diagnostic portions of the bird are depicted. Since many warblers are seen in heavy foliage, it's not that often that birders get magazine cover looks at birds from the side, like depicted in most field

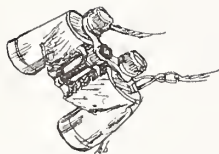
guides. Instead we get peeks of heads, tails, and undersides, often from strange angles. *The Warbler Guide* keys on these looks, the ones we are most likely to experience in the field, and endeavours to teach birders how to recognize each species by their distinctive field marks and behaviors. Each species is shown from below and from a 45 degree angle, giving users of the book experience in what things really look like when the birds are encountered.

Admittedly, Dunn & Garrett do a good job at this as well, and if this was as far as *The Warbler Guide* went, it would be arguable that a new treatment was needed. However, *The Warbler Guide* delves into songs, call notes, chip notes, and flight notes in an impressive way. Sonograms, and instructions on how to interpret them, make up a significant part of the book. Instead of reading a phonetic representation of a song and some vague guidance like "the chip call is sharp and metallic", *The Warbler Guide* attempts to teach as much about auditory identification as visual. And not only are the typical songs covered, but alternate songs for many species are discussed, with some species accounts featuring multiple alternate songs. This is where the book really shines, and where birders can arguably get the best bang for their proverbial green-back.

But even with all the sonograms in the world, there is no substitute for hearing the actual songs, calls, and notes. Not to fear, for the reasonable cover price of the book leaves enough scratch left over to also purchase the companion audio guide that provides, page by page, all of the over 1,000 songs and calls described in the book.

And that my birding friends, is pure gold.





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Upcoming CBC Meetings

Wrightsville Beach NC, January 24-25 2014
 Spring 2014 - Hickory, NC

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Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of December, February,
 April, June, August, and October.

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